

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ACDA-12 IO-13 EB-08 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 TRSE-00 HA-05 /100 W

-----046881 161751Z /41

R 161512Z FEB 78

FM AMCONSUL MILAN

TO AMEMBASSY ROME

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 5849

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

SETAF VICENZA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MILAN 0250

EO 11652: XGDS-1 DECLAS FEB 15, 1988

TAGS: PFOR PINR PINT IT

SUBJECT: CABLE FROM BOLZANO

REF: 76 MILAN 2712; 77 MILAN 1451

SUMMARY. PROBABLE COMMUNIST GAINS IN NOVEMBER REGIONAL ELECTIONS FORESEEN LARGELY DUE INTENSIFIED GERMAN LANGUAGE MAJORITY PRESSURE FOR CONTINUED CONCESSIONS FROM ITALIAN MINORITY. OUTLOOK IS FOR INCREASINGLY BIPOLAR SHARING OF POWER IN LONGER TERM BETWEEN GERMAN SPEAKING SOUTH TIROL PEOPLES PARTY AND PCI. BIG NEWS IN BOLZANO, HOWEVER, IS NATIONAL TRADE UNION ACCEPTANCE OF LAMA'S MORE MARKET ECONOMY ORIENTED POLICY DESCRIBED AS UNDREAMED OF A YEAR AGO. MEANWHILE ITALY'S ALPINE PARADISE ENJOYING ABUNDANT PROSPERITY FUELED WITH AMPLE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT FUNDS. END SUMMARY.

1. CONGEN VISITED BOLZANO 15 FEBRUARY MAKING CALLS ON BISHOP, PREFECT, MAYOR, HEADS OF MAJOR PARTIES, LOCAL EDITOR, POLICE CHIEF AND LEADING BUSINESSMEN.

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2. CONSISTENT WITH LAST SURVEY (77 MILAN 1451), BASIC POLITICAL TREND IS TOWARD INCREASED ROLE BY COMMUNIST PARTY, IN LARGE MEASURE DUE TO UNRELENTING PRESSURE BY SOUTH TIROL PEOPLES PARTY (SVP) FOR FULL AND PROMPT EXECUTION OF AGREEMENT ON GERMAN LANGUAGE ROLE IN PROVINCE AND CITY OF BOLZANO. PREFECT, RARE GERMAN SPEAKING SENIOR ITALIAN OFFICIAL OF LONG EXPERIENCE IN

BOLZANO, CAREFULLY DESCRIBED SITUATION AS GRADUALLY BUT STEADILY WORSENING. GERMAN LANGUAGE BISHOP, WHOSE PRUDENT JUDGMENT HAS BEEN CONSISTENT OVER YEARS OF OUR CONTACT, AGREED AND WARNED THAT UNLESS SVP RELENTS, THERE IS RISK OF RESORT BY ITALIAN MINORITY TO TERRORISM TO ATTRACT ATTENTION OF NATIONAL GOVERNMENT TO ITS PLIGHT. LOCAL EDITOR OF RIZZOLI-OWNED DAILY, NATIVE OF AREA, SIMILARLY CONCERNED AS WAS ENERGETIC AND EXPANSIVE YOUNG DC MAYOR OF BOLZANO. EVEN LEADING GERMAN LANGUAGE BUSINESSMEN (INCLUDING HEAD OF MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION WHOSE BROTHER BEING HELD FOR MILLION DOLLAR RANSOM) JOINED LAMENT THAT SVP CARRYING INSISTENCE ON POUND OF FLESH TOO FAR AND TOO FAST.

3. ALL OF OUR CONTACTS WERE QUICK TO SAY THAT GERMAN LANGUAGE GROUP DEMANDS ARE BROADLY JUSTIFIED AND NEED TO BE MET. BUT LIKE ACHIEVEMENT OF RACIAL JUSTICE IN US, PROCESS IS PAINFUL AND POLITICALLY EXPLOSIVE FOR GROUP YIELDING POWER AND PRIVILEGE.

4. IN THIS SITUATION, LOCAL DC IS BEING MAULED. IT HAS LED ITALIAN ACCEPTANCE OF SVP DEMANDS AND ITS PARTY IN ROME RUNS NATIONAL GOVERNMENT MAKING THE CONCESSIONS. ITALIANS WHO ARE SUFFERING FROM CHANGES ARE ANGRY AND ANGRIER STILL AT DC WHICH THEY CLAIM IS SUPINE, SELLING-OUT, INCAPABLE DEFENDING ITALIAN INTERESTS. YET SVP  
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LEADER SILVIO MAGNAGO, TOUGH, STERN, FORMER GERMAN OFFICER IN WW II WILL MAKE NO CONCESSIONS TO SAVE HIS DC SUPPORTERS.

5. COMMUNISTS ALMOST DOUBLED STRENGTH REACHING 9.3 PERCENT IN THE 1976 NATIONAL ELECTIONS. THEY AND OTHERS EXPECT FURTHER GAINS IN NOVEMBER 1978 REGIONAL ELECTIONS. AND SIGNS ARE THAT THEY ARE ALREADY AT WORK FOR CAMPAIGN. ATTRACTIVE, YOUNG BOLZANO BORN AND SHARP PROVINCIAL SECRETARY GEATANO D'AMBROSIO DESCRIBED SITUATION IN TERMS SHARED BY OTHERS. SVP INTRANSIGENCE OPENS WAY TO PCI PICKING UP ITALIAN COMMUNITY PROTEST VOTES FROM DC. HE RECOUNTED REACTIONS TO IMPORTANT EARLY FEBRUARY VISIT TO TRENTO AND BOLZANO OF BLUE RIBBION PCI NATIONAL DELEGATION LED BY COSSUTTA. DELEGATION MET WITH MAGNAGO, MAYOR AND OTHER LOCAL LEADERS - EXCEPT MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION WHICH REFUSED TO SEE IT. ACCORDING TO D'AMBROSIO, DELEGATION LEARNED LITTLE IT DIDN'T KNOW. SVP WAS UNYIELDING AND DC POWERLESS. NEVERTHELESS, DIALOGUE WORTHWHILE TO IMPROVE MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING OF QUASI-GOVERNMENT PARTY AND LOCAL COMMUNITY.

6. BOLZANO'S MAYOR AGREED THAT PCI VISIT WAS IMPORTANT. COSSUTTA GROUP LUNCED WITH MAYOR AND PROMPTLY BROKE ICE BY GOING TO FIRST NAMES (ACTUALLY "TU" FORM). PCI LEADERS TOLD MAYOR THAT SINCE MAGNAGO AND SVP WOULD NOT COMPROMISE AT LOCAL LEVEL, PCI WOULD USE ITS MUSCLE WHERE IT HAD IT AND WHERE IT COUNTED - IN ROME. IT HAD DECIDED, COSSUTTA SAID, TO TAKE TOUGH LINE HENCEFORTH. MAYOR SAID HE DIDN'T KNOW WHETHER THIS WOULD HAPPEN OR NOT. BUT IT COULD CERTAINLY MAKE PCI MORE EFFECTIVE DEFENDER OF LOCAL ITALIAN COMMUNITY THAN HIS OWN DC WHICH GOT NO SUPPORT FROM EITHER ROME OR FROM SVP.

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R 161512Z FEB 78  
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7. MAYOR DESCRIBED PCI EVOLUTION NATIONALLY AS PROFOUNDLY SIGNIFICANT. HE SAW PARTY AS NOW HALF WAY INTO NEW-DEMOCRATIC MOULD AND DOUBTED THAT IT COULD REVERSE DIRECTION EVEN IF IT NOW TRIED. LIKE OTHERS (BELOW) HE SINGLED OUT TRADE UNION POLICY SHIFT AS MAJOR NEW AND POSITIVE FACTOR IN BOTH POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SCENE. POSITION OVERWHELMINGLY APPROVED IN ROME FEB 14 WAS "BEYOND WILDEST DREAMS A YEAR AGO," HE ARGUED, ATTRIBUTING CHANGE IN LARGE PART TO ANDREOTTI'S SKILLFUL CONDUCT OF GOVERNMENT.

8. WHILE PCI SECRETARY SAID PARTY HAD NO EXPECTATION OF BECOMING MAJORITY PARTY IN BOLZANO, IT DID EXPECT TO GROW. HE DESCRIBED SVP AS BASKET PARTY OF MANY CONFLICTING ECONOMIC GROUPS HELD TOGETHER BY ANTI-COMMUNISM AND GERMAN LANGUAGE ISSUE. BUT BOTH OF THESE CEMENTS WERE WEAKENING. PCI WAS GETTING GERMAN LANGUAGE VOTES - A

VIEW CONFIRMED BY BISHOP AND PSI SECRETARY WHO SPOKE OF PROGRESS AMONG TEACHERS AND TRADE UNIONISTS. MOREOVER, SVP UNABLE TO RECONCILE SOME ECONOMIC CONFLICTS WHICH LED TO INTERNAL SPLITS LIKELY TO ENLARGE IN FUTURE.

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9. AMONG NEARLY ALL INTERLOCUTORS NATINAL TRADE UNION DEVELOPMENTS VOLUNTEERED AS SIGNIFICANT ENCOURAGING STEP. AND FREQUENT REFRAIN WAS THAT ACCEPTANCE OF MORE MARKET ORIENTED POLICIES WAS ASTONISHING CHANGE FROM JUST LAST YEAR. TOUGH BUT REMARKABLY SOPHISTICATED POLICE CHIEF FROM BASILICATA, SAID HE WAS LESS SURPRISED BY CONTENT OF NEW POLICY THAN BY NEAR UNANIMITY OF APPROVAL FROM DELEGATES FROM NORTH WHO WERE NOTED FOR THEIR INDEPENDENCE OF VIEW.

10. EVEN A BRIEF REPORT ON BOLZANO IN MID-WINTER, SURROUNDED BY HIGH ALPS BURIED IN DEEPEST SNOWS OF DECADE OR MORE, WOULD BE INCOMPLETE WITHOUT MENTION OF ECONOMY. OUR INFORMANTS ALL AGREED PROVINCE DOING WELL, AND AS USUAL, FAR BETTER THAN NEIGHBORING ITALY. EVEN DARKEST NAY SAYER, PSI SECRETARY, COULD ONLY ARGUE THAT OFFICIAL FIGURE OF 50 UNEMPLOYED IN PROVINCE WAS UNDERSTATEMENT OF CRISIS SINCE REAL NUMBER WAS 300. COMMUNIST SECRETARY CLOSER IN EVALUATION TO PREFECT WHO SAID SITUATION VERY GOOD. IN FACT, FARMERS WITH HEAVY SUBSIDIES DOING VERY WELL AS IS IMPORTANT TOURIST SECTOR HAVING RECORD YEAR WHILE INDUSTRY DESCRIBED EVEN BY MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT AS DOING WELL.

11. IN PART BOLZANO PROSPERITY DUE TO RAIN OF CENTRAL GOVERNMENT MONEY TO AUTONOMOUS PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT, WHICH GIVES IT RESOURCES UNPARRALLELED ANYWHERE IN COUNTRY, ACCORDING TO LOCAL EXPERTS.

12. WHATEVER THE CAUSES, BOLZANO LOOKS AND ACTS INCREASINGLY LIKE RICH SWISS ALPINE FEDERAL STATE TROUBLED ONLY BY ITS PASSAGE FROM BEING CENTRALLY GOVERNED ITALIAN PROVINCE TO QUASI-INDEPENDENT GERMAN LANGUAGE STATE.  
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## Message Attributes

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